1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

THE PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE EASTER ISLANDERS

by

H. L. SHAPIRO

114
144

The attempts to assign the Easter Islanders to their proper place in the racial hierarchy of Oceania fall into two stages. In the first place, both in simplicity of method and in time, come the unscientific but often acute observations of those early explorers of the Pacific who not only visited Easter Island but pondered the question of race sufficiently to record an opinion. These were subjective judgments, based on a rather wide first-hand experience with Polynesians and Melanesians. Following these first generalizations a number of craniological studies have been made, attempting to solve the same problem, but with the aid of measurements and analyses. But whereas the earlier subjective impressions form a unanimous corpus of opinion, the later, more detailed investigations have rendered the problem more obscure than it was in the beginning.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the classification and relationship of the Oceanic populations received considerable attention, largely stimulated, no doubt, by interest in the taxonomic work of Linné, Buffon and others. It was held that two principal races or stocks inhabited the island world of the Pacific: J. R. Forster (Observations made during a voyage round the world, 1778), who accompanied Cook as a naturalist, in summarizing his own views on this subject expressed those prevailing among contemporary explorers:

> We chiefly observed two great varieties of people in the South Seas; the one more fair, well limbed, athletic, of a fine size, and a kind benevolent temper; the other blacker, the hair just beginning to become woolly and crisp, the body more slender and low, and their temper, if possible more brisk, though somewhat mistrustful. The first race inhabits O-Taheitee, and the Society Isles, the Marquesas, the Friendly Isles, Easter-Island, and New Zealand. The second race peoples New-Caledonia, Tanna, and the New Hebrides, especially Mallicollo.

To fit the Easter Islanders into this dichotomous classification offered no difficulty. They, like other Polynesians, were of relatively light hue, had straight or wavy hair, and somewhat resembled Europeans. From these physical similarities the early explorers drew the logical conclusion that the Easter Islanders formed a part of the Polynesian group. Cook (Voyage towards the South Pole and round the world, 1777) observes: "In colour, features, and language, they [Easter Islanders] bear such affinity to the people of the more western isles, that no one will doubt that they have had the same origin." In this opinion La Pérouse concurred (Voyage round the world, 1799).

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

This eminently reasonable deduction has satisfied the layman familiar with Oceanic groups. The anthropological world, however, misled by inadequate data and by complex but erroneous statistical manipulations, has for many years entertained the hypothesis that the Easter Islanders form a racial complex created by successive migrations of Melanesians and Polynesians. De Quatrefages and Hamy (Les cranes des races humaines, 1882) were among the first to suggest Melanesian resemblances among the Easter Islanders: "La population actuelle [Easter Islanders] dont nous avons étudié les caractères anatomiques sur 70 pièces rapportées par M. Pinart est absolument semblable à celle des Touamotus, mais plusieurs crânes, d'aspect plus ancien, recuellis par ce voyageur, se rapprochent considérablement de ceux des Papouas." De Quatrefages and Hamy neither amplify this statement nor record the evidence for their recognition of Melanesian traits in these "several" skulls.

The question of Easter Island origins, from a physical anthropological point of view, remained in abeyance until 1895 when Volz's study of Easter Island crania appeared (Archiv. f. Anthrop., vol. 23, pp. 97-169, 1895). Volz concluded that the Easter Islanders represented a racial amalgam of several successive migrations. By statistical procedure he claimed to be able to isolate the various racial elements which had combined to produce the Easter Island population. Numerically, the chief strain was Melanesian, both an east and a west variety; next in concentration were the Polynesians; and finally certain skulls were designated as Australian.

As Meyer and Jablonowski ably pointed out in 1900 (Abhl. u. Ber. d. K. Zool. u. Anthrop.—Ethnogr. Mus., Dresden, vol. 9, no. 4), Volz's method was arbitrary and based on misconceptions of elementary statistical facts. Volz apparently misunderstood the significance of the normal distribution. He based his types inadequately on the length-breadth and breadth-height indices, both of which showed a high correlation with each other, and with no statistical justification he divided the field of frequencies to suit his needs. Moreover, the data were presented in a fashion which does not allow of their rechecking. The reexamination by Meyer and Jablonowski of 24 of Volz's 49 Easter Island crania led them to a complete denial of the validity of the Volzian analysis. The paucity of their data, however, prevented them from attempting to solve the problem of Easter Island origins and affinities.

The Volzian hypothesis reappeared in slightly different guise in 1923 when R. B. Dixon published "The Racial History of Man." Dixon on the basis of the length-breadth, length-height, and nasal indices analyzed the available published data and concluded that Easter Island was settled first by a proto-negroid people identified with "Melanesian". This strain contained not only "protonegroid" but also a proto-Australoid element and a "dash of Caspian." These people are represented as tall and black, with

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

114
144

woolly or frizzly hair. Following them came the "Caspian" migration of lighter-skinned, straighter-haired folk. From the mingling of these two layers of population, the Easter Islanders were derived. Dixon calculated that 55 percent of the total population was proto-negroid, with Caspian, proto-Australoid, and palae-Alpine in nearly equal proportions. Dixon's system, although a monument of industry, fails to satisfy the requirements of a successful classification since it is based upon an unrealistic conception of human biology and taxonomy. Such significant factors as variation, selection and inbreeding receive scant, if any, consideration in his rather rigid and mechanical system. And the underlying genetic assumptions exceed the limits of precise knowledge.

In Dixon's analysis of the Easter Island population there is no direct evidence which impells us to accept two migrations, even assuming the validity of his method of type analysis. Within Polynesia populations might easily vary from archipelago to archipelago depending on the effects of chance selection, accidents of breeding and isolation, particularly in small groups. The resulting differentiation need not be accounted for by successive migrations.

The most recent[2] study of the Easter Islanders is that published by Von Bonin in 1931 (Biometrika, vol. 23, pts. 3-4). He pooled the collection of crania obtained by the Routledges and now housed in the Hunterian Museum with series from the Ethnographical Museum in Leiden, from the British Museum (Natural History), and from Volz's collection. The variability of this combined series proved to be comparable with three standard series used in the Biometric Laboratory of the University of London. By means of the coefficient of racial likeness the pooled Easter Island skulls were then compared with a number of fringe racial groups including the Maori and the Moriori but no especial affinity was discovered with any of them. Von Bonin concluded that the Easter Island skulls revealed no statistical evidence of marked heterogeneity, although in several respects they showed specialization. In a note to Von Bonin's paper, G. M. Morant suggests, on the basis of additional coefficient of racial likeness comparisons, that the Easter Island skulls display a resemblance to Loyalty Islands crania.

Finally, we may refer briefly to statements by Sir Arthur Keith and Capt. T. A. Joyce. Neither has published, to my knowledge, any extensive study of Easter Island crania, but Keith has examined the Routledge collection and Joyce, the Crawford collection. Keith says, "The Polynesian type is fairly purely represented in some of the Easter Islanders, but they are absolutely and relatively a remarkably long-headed people, and in this feature they approach the Melanesian more than the Polynesian type" (C. S. Rout-

[2] Since writing this, I have seen a reference to a craniological study of Oceanic races by K. Wagner, which I have been unable to consult.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

ledge, Mystery of Easter Island, p. 295). Commenting upon Mrs. Routledge's address before the Royal Geographic Society, Joyce remarks, "I could not get away from the conclusion that in their measurements and general appearance these skulls were far more Melanesian than Polynesian" (Roy. Geogr. Soc., Jour., May 1917).

Thus, this brief resumé of the craniological investigations of Easter Island racial affinities fails to uncover any unanimity of opinion. In general, however, these studies fall into two schools. One, although recognizing a Polynesian connection, seeks to tie up the Easter Islanders with Melanesians or Australians; the other denies the validity of the evidence of a relationship with non-Polynesian groups but fails to confirm their Polynesian origin. But none offers the solution, which occurred long ago to the untutored explorers, that the Easter Islanders are Polynesians.

The evidence from the living Easter Islanders, which has thus far escaped discussion, seems to me especially decisive in supporting the reasonableness of the Polynesian origin of the Easter Islanders. The data from the living population are at present far more significant than those from skulls because comparable data already exist for many Polynesian island groups, whereas cranial information on Polynesians is entirely inadequate and often misleading. In fact, I believe that part of the confusion which has arisen from the craniological studies of the Easter Islanders may be attributed to inadequate information on the cranial characteristics of Polynesians. During a recent visit to Easter Island I gathered a series of anthropometric measurements on 22 Easter Island adult males who were rigidly selected out of a total population of 456 for their purity of descent. Everyone suspected of mixture with foreigners was excluded from the series. These measurements, after making necessary allowances for the differences between living and skeletal material, not only agree with the cranial measurements, but also indicate that the Easter Islanders are definitely Polynesians of a somewhat specialized and exaggerated type isolated by migration and intensified by inbreeding.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

141
144
171

In support of this latter statement, I submit the following table comparing the Easter Islanders with other Polynesian groups:

Measurements:	Society[a]	Hawaii[b]	Samoa[c]	Tonga[d]	Marquesas[e]	Maori[f]	Easter Island
Stature (cm)	171.02	169.51	171.70	173.00	170.44	170.60	173.32
Head Length (mm)	190.35	187.85	190.60	191.00	193.20	196.50	199.09
Head Width (mm)	159.10	157.67	154.80	154.80	154.30	152.80	148.45
Minimum Frontal (mm)	103.00	107.85	103.40	104.80	102.70		101.50
Bizygomatic (mm)	145.10	144.50	145.90	143.50	142.90	145.70	141.32
Bigonial (mm)	109.60	111.18	104.60	104.80	108.10		107.41
Face Height (mm)	123.70	125.43	131.10	128.20	121.90	124.00	122.00
Nose Height (mm)	56.00	55.60	59.80	57.50	55.60	52.80	57.27
Nose Width (mm)	43.20	43.53	43.80	44.40	43.20	40.10	43.00
Indices:							
Cephalic	83.61	84.01	81.30	81.10	79.89	77.70	74.61
Fronto-parietal	64.98	68.44	66.80	67.60	66.60		68.39
Cephalo-facial	91.27	91.68	94.20	92.80	92.64	95.30	95.20
Zygo-frontal	71.03	74.73	70.90	73.10	71.92		71.84
Zygo-gonial	75.52	77.06	71.70	73.20	75.68		76.00
Facial	85.37	86.74	89.90	89.20	85.57	85.10	86.41
Nasal	77.35	78.41	73.60	77.60	77.84	75.90	75.36

[a] Series measured by H. L. Shapiro. See The physical characters of the Cook Islanders: Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 12, no. 1, 1936.
[b] Wissler, Clark, Observations on Hawaiian somatology: Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 9, no. 4, 1927.
[c] Series measured by Gordon Macgregor. See The physical characters of the Cook Islanders: Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 12, no. 1, 1936.
Sullivan, L. R., A contribution to Samoan somatology: Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 8, no. 2, 1921.
[d] Sullivan, L. R., Tongan somatology: Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 8, no. 4, 1922.
[e] Buck, P. H. (Te Rangi Hiroa), Maori somatology: Polynesian Soc. Jour., vol. 31, no. 121, pp. 37-44; no. 123, pp. 145-153; no. 124, pp. 159-170; vol. 32, no. 125, pp. 21-28; no. 128, pp. 189-199.

It is evident from the above that the Easter Islanders fit into the Polynesian physical pattern, although in several traits, particularly in cephalic proportions, they occupy an extreme position. But if these deviations are considered from a geographic point of view an illuminating distributional pattern becomes apparent. (See Bishop Mus., Mem., vol. 12, no. 1, 1936.) In the following table I have arranged the head lengths and head breadths of a number of series, some as yet unpublished, in the order of their geographic distance from the Society Islands:

	Head Length	Head Width
Society	190.35	159.10
Tuamotus[a]	190.30	155.30
Tatakoto[a]	193.59	150.98
Marquesas	193.20	154.30
Mangareva[a]	195.95	152.67
Easter Island	199.09	148.45

[a] Unpublished data, collected by the author.

These means show that the head length increases and the head width decreases in proportion to the distance from the Society Islands and consequently in ratio to the possibility of influence from the Society group. Easter

.1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Island, being the most isolated, shows the least, if any, influence from the Society Islands on its cephalic dimensions. The transition to the Easter Island mean is closest through the Mangarevans who are likewise the most proximate geographically.

From these abbreviated and summary comparisons, the Easter Islanders emerge as a distinctly Polynesian group deviating significantly only in their cephalic dimensions. But this deviation appears to be demonstrably a survival of traits which have become progressively overlain and obliterated by influences emanating from the Society Islands. As I have suggested elsewhere, the Easter Islanders form part of an early and now marginal population in eastern Polynesia which was succeeded by the more recent brachycephalic Society Islanders. It is at present impossible to determine whether the extremity of the Easter Island position in cephalic range represents a survival of the original character of this early population from which the Mangarevans have been modified, or whether it constitutes an intensification of Mangarevan norms through selective migration followed by isolation and inbreeding.

From another point of view the association of Easter Island with Melanesian or Australian stocks, also, does violence to the known facts. Although much has yet to be discovered about the genetics of skin color and hair form, there is little doubt that the dark pigmentation of Melanesians and Australians and the frizzly hair of the former are traits which are often dominant in racial crossing and are never completely recessive. But even if they were, they would inevitably reveal themselves in some degree. However, the Easter Islanders bear no trace whatever of these distinctively Melanesian or Australian features. Nor do early descriptions give any suggestion of frizzly hair or dark skins. More than half the Easter Island males have an unexposed skin color corresponding to number 14 on the Von Luschan scale and exposed skin color equivalent to number 21. The 22 Easter Island males are distributed as follows:

Von Luschan Scale	Unexposed Skin	Exposed Skin
11	1	
12	2	
13	2	
14	10	
15	3	
16	2	2
17	1	
18		2
19		
20		2
21		12
22	1	2
23		
24		1
25		1

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

142 144 These distributions fall within Polynesian limits; in fact, the Easter Islanders appear to be fairer than many characteristically Polynesian groups:

	Unexposed Skin Color		Exposed Skin Color	
	Range	Mode	Range	Mode
Easter Island	11-22	14	16-25	21
Mangareva	11-17	14 and 17	14-25	16 and 22
Tuamotus	10-24	17	15-25	22
Society Islands	10-22	16	14-24	16
Marquesas	12-22	14	14-22	16

Similarly the hair form of the Easter Islanders shows no evidence of Melanesian influence; indeed, the following figures reveal that the Easter Islanders have a higher percentage of straight hair than is generally true of other eastern Polynesian groups.

	Hair Form				
	Straight	Low Waves	Deep Waves	Curly	Frizzly
Easter Island	54.55%	4.55%	22.73%	18.18%	
Mangareva	47.62	19.05	9.52	23.81	
Tuamotus	32.14	31.63	23.47	10.71	2.04%
Society Islands	26.98	26.98	26.98	19.05	
Marquesas	21.69	26.51	28.92	22.89	

Similarly, in other traits which Melanesian admixture might be expected to modify, such as relative width of the nose, facial projection and thickness of lip, the distributions among the Easter Islanders offer no support for the Melanesian hypothesis.

Finally I should like to add that blood groupings, as yet unpublished, which were determined for the Easter Islanders not only corroborate the purity of our series but also confirm its relationship with Polynesia rather than Melanesia. Groups B and AB are lacking, thus agreeing with the Mangarevans and Tuamotuans.

The anthroponetric evidence which I have been able to gather points unequivocally to the Polynesian origin of the Easter Islanders. The closest approximation appears to be with Mangareva, although there is some reason to believe that the Easter Islanders form part of an early, marginal population whose influence may still be seen in the physical traits of the Maori, the Marquesans, some Tuamotuans, as well as the Mangarevans.

LANGUAGE

197 114 Easter Islanders were recognized as Polynesians almost as soon as they boarded Cook's ship. The few words they uttered made it clear that their language was closely related to Tahitian. The lists of words recorded by Cook (53, vol. 2, p. 364) and by J. R. Forster (84, p. 284) entirely confirm this first impression, and there has never been any doubt that the Easter Island language belongs entirely to the Polynesian group. Some of the Easter

3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

rium existing between the number of individuals of both sexes, not only in the total number, but also at most of the different stages of life (45 adolescents of the two sexes, for instance); secondly, the large number of old women compared with the old men—only 4 old men over 50, but 18 old women, one of them almost 95 years old (Paulina Viriamo).

DENSITY

Easter Island has an area of approximately 17,900 hectares. The natives have the use of only 2,000 hectares, for the other 15,900 hectares belong to the Produce Company, by virtue of a concession. If from these 2,000 hectares are deducted the government lands and such establishments as roads, the common, the church, school, cemetery, the land of the Commissioner, etc., the extent of the land actually belonging to the natives is reduced to 1,800 hectares, which results in a density of 4 inhabitants to a hectare.

The comparison between the census of Salmon in 1886 and ours in 1934 brings a realization of the rapid increase of the population, which has tripled in less than a half century. The portion of public land occupied by the natives is not one of the most favored for agriculture. If the increase in population continues according to the same rhythm the day will come when the establishment of future families will constitute a veritable problem.

PURE-BLOODED AND MIXED-BLOODED INDIVIDUALS

To distinguish between Easter Islanders of pure and mixed blood is an undertaking not only difficult but indeed impossible. During the whole course of the nineteenth century the island was visited by a great number of ships, the crews of which, on account of the liberty of Polynesian customs, were able to have sex relations with the natives. To these occasional associations there have been added all those which have occurred after the foreign occupation.

It is easy to understand that under such conditions it may be difficult to make a distinction which can claim to be precise between the direct descendants of the old inhabitants and those of mixed blood. Nevertheless, in the hope of making a more or less correct classification, I have resorted to the following method. Taking as a basis the personal information supplied by the individuals themselves, and corroborated by the testimony of the oldest natives and those most reliable in the community, I have considered as pure those who for

3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

three generations back show no intermixture with foreign elements. By foreigners I mean not only Europeans and Chileans but Polynesians from other islands—Tuamotuans, Tahitians, and others.

Only 159 Easter Islanders, or 34.86 percent of the total population, can be considered of pure blood. The 297 others, or 65.14 percent of the population, show degrees of intermixture varying but evident. A detailed study of degrees of intermixture shows the following individuals with some foreign blood:

Tahitian	184
German	101
French	77
Tuamotuan	53
Chilean	46
English	31
Chinese	6
American	2
Italian	2
Unknown	12

The 12 whose mixed blood is unknown are natural children whose mothers have no certainty or not complete certainty as to the father. This fact has nothing extraordinary about it when one realizes the great sexual liberty which the native women enjoy.

The proportion of foreign blood varies for each one of these crossings from 1/2 to 1/16, that is to say, we have been able in many cases to search back to the fourth generation.

The exact percentage of foreign blood among 297 Easter Island crossings is clear from the following table:

	Percent
Tahitian blood	39.28
Chilean blood	12.90
Tuamotuan blood	11.49
German blood	11.08
French blood	10.00
English blood	8.47
Unknown blood	4.03
Chinese blood	1.20
American blood	0.60
Italian blood	0.60

If these two tables are set side by side one is struck by the fact that the mixtures with Chilean blood have fifth place in the table

3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

showing the number of individuals with mixed blood, but second place, immediately following the Tahitian, in the table of percentages. This apparent contradiction is explained by the recent influx of Chilean blood, which tends to increase, while Tahitian, German, French and other older strains have a tendency to diminish, so that the proportions of these elements are rather low.

CIVIL REGISTRATION

The great freedom which prevails in sexual relations does not prevent frequent legal marriages. As a general rule, the natives marry young and a celibate over 30 years of age is an exception. In numerous instances widowed persons remarry, especially if still young, and there are widows who have had three or four husbands (Catalina Tori Makotahia, for example).

Therefore, even if one considers as celibates all the young people over 13 years, the percentage of married people remains always greater.

	Individuals	Percent
Married	112	46.66
Celibates	94	38.74
Widowed persons	34	14.60
Total	240	100.00

ILLEGITIMATE AND LEGITIMATE CHILDREN

From 1915 to 1917, following the creation of a government register at Easter Island, almost all the unions which had been given religious consecration were legalized and at the same time the greater number of the children legitimized. That is why we shall consider as illegitimate those children who were born out of wedlock after 1917 and those who were not recognized at that time.

Even with these reservations the number of illegitimate children is fairly high. It amounts to 96, which constitutes 21 percent of the total population.

ILLITERACY

Public instruction in Easter Island until the past year was the most rudimentary. Long periods of no schooling at all alternated with more or less accidental sessions of class work. It was not until 1934 that a public school was organized, always dependent upon the

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945 I
OY2 Easter Island OY2

We saw Easter Island for the first time on a rainy day in winter. It was also my first sight of a Polynesian island. I did not expect, of course, to find the classic coconut palms and hibiscus, for I knew that the island was without trees or shrubs, but I certainly had not imagined that this outpost of the sunny islands in the South Seas would remind me, as it did at once, of the coasts of Sweden and Norway. When the cruiser on which we had made the voyage anchored off Hangaroa, the only modern village on the island, memories of Scandinavia came even more vividly into my mind as I examined through my field glasses the frame houses of the natives, which are of a type common in northern Europe. The capital of the legendary Easter Island looked, for all the world, like a humble fishermen's hamlet seen in a fog on the Baltic.

I shall never forget that first day when we were anchored just off the little harbor. Gusts of wind drove long rollers against the shore with such force that they broke amid spouts of spray with a deep pounding. In front of the sandy cove, the waves piled up over a bar that, it seemed, nobody could cross. The natives gathered on the beach did not appear very eager to meet us, but the *karanga*, the cries which announce any important event, had sounded in the village, and from everywhere, on all the paths leading to the sea, we could see men on horseback coming at full speed. Near the boathouses a palaver was held, and on the outcome of that everything depended. The commander of the cruiser had decided that on no condition would he put us and our 90 boxes of equipment ashore. Our only hope for an immediate and safe landing lay with the natives.

Suddenly we saw them rush to the boathouses, drag three canoes toward the sea, jump into them and disappear in the surf. We held our breath, expecting the canoes to capsize in their attempt to cross the bar. But after a short time, one, two, then all three surged up from the wall of water and headed toward our ship. The men were received with cheers, a well-deserved tribute to their courage and skill.

When the canoes reached our ship we saw that they were full of natives wearing the most surprising disguises. The majority were dressed in old uniforms of the Chilean navy. In one canoe there were, it appeared, lieutenants, admirals, surgeons, and engineers. A few had also put on feather headdresses, similar to those in which their ancestors had received Captain Cook, but they wore them merely as an advertisement of the native wares of all kinds which they wished to trade for shirts and sailors' caps.

Each time I find myself using the word "natives" for the modern inhabitants of Easter Island, I have a hesitant feeling, just as hesitant as on that day when I first saw their faces over the railing. I

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2

could not decide whether these men were a heterogeneous crowd of European beachcombers or real Polynesians, the sons of the sea rovers who had colonized the island. That European blood flowed in their veins, there was no doubt. Some of the men who came aboard and tried to sell their curios looked decidedly French; others might almost have had brothers or cousins in Hamburg or in London. Yet there was something exotic in all of them and traces of old Polynesian descent could be seen in their black, wavy hair, in the strange, vivacious dark eyes, in the high foreheads. These first Easter Islanders whom I met impressed me as of mixed race. Later, genealogical investigations showed that only a third of the present inhabitants could claim descent from a pure Polynesian ancestry—and the claims were not always well attested.

There is one misconception about these people which should be dispelled. It has been stated over and over again that the modern Easter Islanders are a degenerate population and that they can have nothing in common with the people who carved the statues and inscribed the tablets. This is not true. They appeared to me in many ways to be highly gifted.

During the 6 months I spent on the island, I found myself compelled to admire their ingenuity and their remarkable talent for assimilation. No European village has given me the impression of more intelligent adaptation to a changing world. This capacity is doubtless responsible, in part, for the passing of the old culture. Though the most isolated people in the world, the Easter Islanders are constantly on the lookout for new ideas, new fashions—and also new vices. Their extraordinary faculty for exploiting any weakness or interest in their visitors has had some amusing results. For example, a few years after the missionaries came to the island, the natives started to speculate on the antiquities and on the mysterious past of their little country. Finding that foreigners were interested in the small wooden images of emaciated figures which had been one of their forefathers' greatest artistic achievements, they proceeded to produce crude imitations by the hundreds. The modern craftsmen are without illusion as to the perfection of their work, but they excuse themselves by saying: "Why should we bother about beauty and finish when our patrons don't discriminate between good and bad images and we get in exchange the soap and clothes we want?" Thanks to this commercial instinct, several of their old industries have been kept alive.

One of their greatest and most profitable activities is palming off on amateur archeologists rough stones alleged to be ancient artifacts or well-made imitations of them. The very day of my landing a native cynically proposed to cooperate with me in faking old imple-

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935)1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

114 in a part of the southern ocean far removed from that in which the
133 gaunt cliffs of Easter Island confront the unceasing assault of the waves. It is surrounded by vast ocean depths which occur in the expanse of 2,500 miles of ocean separating the island from the American coast on the east and from the nearest land 1,750 miles to the west, namely the Gambier Islands. Easter Island is a volcanic island, and a lofty one, like the Marquesas and Hawaii, in contrast with atolls and coral islands which are low-lying. If one could denude such islands of their dense coverlet of mango-scrub, breadfruit trees, bamboo and cocoa palms, drain the springs, and cover them with a growth of yellow herbage—then such an islet as Hivaoa of the Marquesas will come to resemble Easter Island.

132 It is the bareness of Easter Island, the result of its colder climate and exposure to the four winds of heaven, which has given birth to these misconceptions. The idea of Polynesia does not fall in with a barren rocky landscape, monotonous pampa, or a pale sun incessantly obscured by rain-clouds.

144 These talkative Pascuans,[4] like naughy laughing children, whose language and appearance is Polynesian without a shadow of doubt, can no longer be denied those ancestors who carved the notorious statutes, engraved the puzzling symbols of *rongorongo* and set up round the island's coast all those innumerable monuments (actually 184).

174 At what date was Easter Island first settled? There are excellent reasons for believing that it was between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era. We have certain traditions relating to the peopling of Hawaii and New Zealand. The Polynesians established themselves there at the end of their migrations between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Considering the remoteness of Easter Island, it is reasonable to suppose that it was peopled about the same time. The approximate date of the colonization of this island is, however, based upon the list of the Pascuan kings. This list has been narrated to several observers; the most complete is that of Thompson [5] who obtained it from an informant who was a survivor of the pagan period. One may assume a length of 12 years for the reigns of each of the 57 kings in the list. Maurata,
[43] the last Pascuan who was certainly regarded as a king, died in 1864, as a result of the Peruvian slave raids. Calculation gives us exactly the beginning of the thirteenth century.

[4] We may well adopt the English equivalent to avoid the clumsy "Easter Islanders."—Translator.

[5] A paymaster of the American Navy, and the author of a short archeological account which, considering that it was based merely upon a visit of 8 days, is remarkably informative and full. (Rep. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1889, pp. 447–552, 1891.)